

## Senate insurance reform news - Oct. 23, 2007

Schumer seeks expanded flood insurance program

By Keith Herbert, Newsday

More

New Yorkers are turning to unregulated insurers for property coverage, further proof that federal regulation is needed to stabilize the homeowners' insurance market on Long Island, Sen. Charles Schumer said Monday.

During a news conference at the home of a Huntington homeowner, Schumer (D-N.Y.) cited the trend to support his call for legislation that would expand a federal flood insurance program to include hurricane wind damage.

Private insurers fearful of a catastrophic storm hitting Long Island have been unwilling to cover wind damage, so the federal government should add "multi-peril coverage" to its flood insurance program, Schumer said.

"I think this would solve the problem once and for all," he said of legislation being considered by a Senate banking committee he serves on.

Vitter puts hold on insurance bill

His objections include lack of wind coverage

By Bruce Alpert, Times Picayune

WASHINGTON

-- Sen. David Vitter, R-La., has put a hold on a flood insurance overhaul bill because he says it doesn't raise coverage limits or expand the program to provide wind-damage coverage to address a shortage of affordable policies in Gulf Coast communities devastated by hurricanes in 2005.

Because

the Senate calendar often is set by unanimous consent, letting a single senator block a bill's consideration, Vitter's hold puts passage in limbo. Members put a hold on a bill in an effort to get the sponsors to negotiate changes.

Vitter said Monday that he's looking for several changes in the bill approved last week by the Senate Banking Committee.

He

wants to increase the current maximum levels of flood insurance to for residential properties from \$250,000 to \$335,000 and for commercial properties from \$500,000 to \$750,000.

The

program, Vitter said, also should be expanded to allow policyholders new lines of optional coverage for business interruption and to provide full replacement of contents.

Congress should take steps to alleviate a shortage of wind coverage along the Gulf Coast and other coastal areas, he said.

Vitter to put hold on bill for insurance

By Kate Magandy, Sun Herald

-- Louisiana Sen. David Vitter said Monday he's putting a hold on the Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2007.

According

to the Senate Web site, a hold is "an informal practice by which a senator informs the floor leader that he or she does not wish a particular bill or other measure to reach the floor for consideration. The majority leader need not follow the senator's wishes but is on notice that the opposing senator may filibuster any motion to proceed to consider the measure."

Vitter,

in a press release, said the current bill is similar to last year's and doesn't include provisions that were approved by the House. Vitter particularly addressed the need for greater flood coverage through higher limits and new optional lines of coverage as well as the need for wind-related measures to stabilize general liability rates.

...  
Vitter also said he plans to organize a meeting between himself, U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu and Mississippi senators Trent Lott and Thad Cochran to discuss what is needed to improve the current version of the bill.

Lott  
spokesman Lee Youngblood said Monday that Lott also is concerned with the current version of the bill and is committed to getting results for the people of South Mississippi.

"He's going to try any way he can to get a result, whether it's in committee or on the floor," Youngblood said.

"The  
bottom line is, they didn't include (the wind provision) the other day. He will try to help in any way he can. He has a stake in seeing the wind provision added."

Vitter stalls bill on flood insurance

By Sean Reilly, Mobile Press-Register

#### WASHINGTON

-- U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La, is blocking action by the full Senate on a flood insurance overhaul, saying that it should include higher coverage limits and optional protection for windstorm damage.

The  
overhaul, sponsored by U.S. Sens. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., and Richard Shelby, R-Tuscaloosa, won unanimous approval from the Senate banking committee Wednesday.

But  
in a Monday letter to his two colleagues, Vitter said the legislation should have increased coverage levels, as a House-passed measure would do. The House bill also would allow flood insurance policyholders to add wind coverage; Vitter urged the Senate to consider a similar provision or take other action "to address the broader insurance

crisis."